

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

I. STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-7, 9-17 and 19-29 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 9, and 19 have been amended herewith to expedite the prosecution of the present application. Claims 8, 18 and 30 have been canceled without prejudice.

It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added by virtue of this amendment. Support for the amended claims can be found throughout the specification as originally filed.

II. 35 U.S.C. 103(a) REJECTIONS

Claims 1-6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent Application Publication NO. 2001/0023193 to Rhoads ("the Rhoads '193 publication") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,085,903 to Jotcham et al. ("the Jotcham patent"). Further, claim 7 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Rhoads patent as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,311,214 to Rhoads ("the Rhoads '214 patent"). Also, claims 9-17 and 19-29 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Rhoads '214 patent in view of the Jotcham patent.

In response, the Examiner's indication in the current Office Action that claims 8, 18 and 30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims is acknowledged with appreciation.

In order to expedite the prosecution of the present application, claim 1 has been amended herewith to incorporate all of the limitations of claim 8. Moreover, independent claim 9 has been amended to incorporate all of the limitations of claim 18. Further, independent claim 19 has been amended to incorporate all of the limitations of claim 30. As noted

above, these amendments were made for the sole purpose of expediting the prosecution of the present application and thus in no way should be construed as an admission by the Applicants regarding the merits of the Examiner's rejections.

Therefore, in view of the above amendments, withdrawal of the rejections to independent claims 1, 9 and 19 is respectfully requested. As claims 2-7 depend from and incorporate all of the limitations of amended claim 1, claims 10-17 depend from and incorporate all of the limitations of amended claim 9 and claims 20-29 depend from and incorporate all of the limitations of amended claim 19, withdrawal of the rejections to these dependent claims is likewise respectfully requested.

III. CONCLUSION

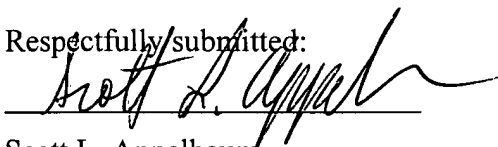
It is believed that all pending claims as currently presented are in condition for allowance. A notice of allowance is respectfully requested.

According to currently recommended Patent Office policy, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below in the event that a telephone interview will advance the prosecution of this application. An early and favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Appl. No. 09/929,399
At Unit: 2131

No fees are believed due with this amendment. However, if there are any fees due, then please charge them to deposit account no.: 50-1924.

Respectfully submitted:



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3/4/05
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop: AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. BOX 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

3/4/05

Date



Ann Okrentowich